

SENATE BILL 2857

By Yager

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 71,
relative to the reform of various public assistance
programs .

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The commissioner of the department of human services is directed to conduct a study that will assess the feasibility of a more work friendly assistance eligibility benefits requirement in order to increase workforce participation. The commissioner should particularly attend to reforming current public assistance programs and coordinating income disregard and eligibility across TANF, food stamps, TennCare and other applicable public assistance programs to encourage work effort on the part of welfare recipients and as a means to supplement the income of low-wage employees. The study should examine the feasibility of adopting graduated income disregards for benefits that decline over time based on the increased income from the recipients' employment. The commissioner shall consult with the various state departments and agencies, including but not limited to, the department of agriculture, the department of housing and urban development, the bureau of TennCare and any other interested stakeholders. This study shall include a comprehensive review of the entire public assistance program and how work-friendly it is with recipients joining the workforce. The department shall report the results of the study to the senate health and welfare committee and the house health and human resources committee on or before January 15, 2013.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.